



# Washington State Department of Agriculture

## Hearing Notice

For immediate release: Jan. 27, 2003 (03-06)

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

### **Homeowner use of pesticides for mosquito control topic of WSDA hearing**

OLYMPIA – Homeowners would be allowed limited use of pesticides to control mosquito larvae on their property without a license under a proposal being considered by the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA). Larvicides target mosquitoes where they breed in stagnant water and a license is required for their use. This proposal applies to larvicides labeled only for homeowner use, and does not apply to larvicides used on aquatic sites that flow into natural bodies of water such as lakes or streams.

Comments on the proposal will be heard at 6 p.m. Feb. 4 at the WSU Cooperative Extension office, 720 Sleater Kinney Rd. SE, Suite Y, Lacey. The deadline to comment is 5 p.m. Feb. 5.

If adopted, the proposal will give Washington residents another tool to control mosquitoes, which are known to carry West Nile virus. The virus, which can cause illness in people, horses and many types of birds, was confirmed in two horses and two dead birds in Washington last fall. The best way to prevent illness is to minimize exposure to mosquitoes and control mosquito populations.

“Homeowners can help to control mosquito populations on their property by eliminating breeding sites such as old tires, buckets, plastic covers and other containers where water can stagnate, and by changing the water in birdbaths and watering troughs weekly,” says Ted Maxwell, manager of the WSDA pesticide registration program. “However, in some situations removing the site or changing the water may not be practical. When chemical control is required, the preferred method is to control mosquitoes in the larval stage before they become adults.”

Many of the mosquito control products available to the homeowner are sprays designed to kill adult mosquitoes. Larvicides are often safer for the environment and more effective because they can be targeted to the exact area where mosquitoes are developing. However, nearly all larvicides are labeled for use in water and, with limited exceptions, products labeled for use in water are classified as “state restricted use,” requiring a license to sell, purchase and use the product.

The number of larvicides labeled only for homeowner use is small, primarily consisting of products containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *israelensis* (commonly referred to as *Bti*).

MORE

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For a copy of the proposed rules, call Laurie Mauerman at (360) 902-2012. Send written comments to:  
Washington State Department of Agriculture, Pesticide Management Division, P.O. Box 42589, Olympia, WA  
98504-2589. Comments may also be sent by fax to (360) 902-2093, or by e-mail to [lmauerman@agr.wa.gov](mailto:lmauerman@agr.wa.gov).

For information on West Nile virus, including links to the state Department of Health, visit the WSDA Web site  
at <http://www.wa.gov/agr/FoodAnimal/AnimalHealth/WNVdefault.htm>.

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